

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOCCOW 1481

EXDIS

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TAGS: PINT PFOR CSCE SHUM UR
SUBJECT: ATTACKS AGAINST SAKHAROV; SITUATION OF OTHER HUMAN
RIGHTS DISSIDENTS

REF: MOSCOW 1023

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. OFFICIAL SOVIET ATTACKS ON SAKHAROV
CONTINUE. TASS ENGLISH WIRE ALSO ATTACKS HIM, LINKING
HIM WITH WESTERN GROUPS AND GOVERNMENTS. HUMAN RIGHTS DISSIDENTS
TURCHIN AND ALEKSEYEVA ARE FAIRLY RELAXED ABOUT THEIR POSITION,
AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE. THEY REGARD AS
BUMBLING THE INDECISIVE HANDLING OF THE CASE BY THE KGB IN THE
LAST FEW WEEKS, AND ATTRIBUTE IT TO DIVIDED COUNCILS IN THAT ORGANI-
ZATION. ORLOV CSCE GROUP MEMBER ALEK GINSBURG HAS AT LAST BEEN
RELEASED FROM THE HOSPITAL, ALTHOUGH HE HAS NOW CONTRACTED TB.
END SUMMARY.

2. OFFICIAL ATTACKS CONTINUE AGAINST SAKHAROV IN CONNECTION
WITH HIS ASSERTION JANUARY 13 AT A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT THE
KGB MAY HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE METRO EXPLOSION (SEE MOSCOW
1305). A ZNANIYE SOCIETY LECTURE JANUARY 28
GAVE JOURNALIST V.A. SEMENOV OF NOVOSTI A FORUM FROM WHICH TO
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ACCUSE SAKHAROV OF MAKING "SLANDEROUS ACCUSATIONS." ALTHOUGH HIS
KNOWLEDGE OF STATE SECRETS MADE IT UNDESIRABLE TO EXPEL SAKHAROV,
SEMENOV CONTINUED IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, SAKHAROV COULD BE
BROUGHT TO JUSTICE "LIKE BUKOVSKIY." SEMENOV WENT ON TO LINK SAK-
HAROV AND HIS ACTIVITIES WITH THE CHARTER 77 SIGNATORIES.

3. THE TASS ENGLISH WIRE FOR JANUARY 29 HAS A LONG ARTICLE BY

TASS COMMENTATOR YURIY KORNILOV ENTITLED "ABOUT ANOTHER ANTI-SOVIET CAMPAIGN". THIS COMMENTARY ALSO LINKS SAKHAROV WITH THE EASTERN EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS, AND WITH WESTERN GROUPS AND GOVERNMENTS AS WELL. KORNILOV CALLS THE SOVIET HUMAN RIGHTS DISSIDENTS "INTERNAL EMIGRANTS" AND SAYS THAT THEY RECEIVE THEIR SUPPORT FROM THE CORRESPONDENTS OF THE BOURGEOIS PRESS RESIDENT IN MOSCOW. KORNILOV THEN NOTES HIS SURPRISE AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT STATEMENT ON SAKHAROV, WHICH HE CALLED AN "OFFICIAL" STATEMENT.

4. SAKHAROV, KORNILOV CONTINUES, IS WELL KNOWN IN THE USSR. HE HAS CREATED "LAMPOONS" AGAINST THE SOVIET PEOPLE, STARTED "A VERITABLE BRAWL IN SIBERIA" AND NOW IS SPREADING THE CANNARD ABOUT THE KGB AND METRO EXPLOSION. LIKE SEMENOV, KORNILOV COMMENTS THAT SAKHAROV IS OPENING HIMSELF TO CRIMINAL PROSECUTION, AND CONCLUDES WITH A TYPICAL SOVIET ARGUMENT THAT THE WEST WAS HARDLY IN A POSITION TO COMMENT ABOUT ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT BY THE USSR.

5. VALERIY TURCHIN AND LYUDA ALEKSEYEVA OF THE SOVIET CHAPTER OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TOLD US JANUARY 28 THAT THE CSCE OBSERVATION GROUP MEMBERS AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS DISSIDENTS FEEL FAIRLY SAFE UNTIL AFTER THE BELGRADE CSCE REVIEW CONFERENCE. THEY ASSUME THAT THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES WOULD BE SO WORRIED ABOUT LIKELY ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES IN THE WEST THAT THEY WOULD NOT MOVE IN A FIRM MANNER AGAINST THE HUMAN RIGHTS DISSIDENTS BEFORE BELGRADE. NATURALLY, THE HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP INTENDS TO USE THIS GRACE PERIOD TO THE MAXIMUM.

6. TURCHIN POINTED OUT AS TYPICAL THE INEPTNESS OF THE KGB'S
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TACTICS IN CONNECTION WITH THE ATTEMPTS TO REPRESS THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ORLOV GROUP. TURCHIN COMMENTED THAT HE FELT THAT THERE WAS AN ELEMENT IN THE KGB THAT WANTED TO "DO SOMETHING" ABOUT THE DISSIDENTS. THIS ELEMENT HAS ENOUGH AUTONOMY TO BE ABLE, FOR EXAMPLE, TO SEARCH THE APARTMENTS OF THE CSCE GROUP, OR TO HARASS YURIY ORLOV. IT IS APPARENTLY NOT YET, HOWEVER, ABLE DECISIVELY TO MOVE AGAINST THE GROUP. THE RESULT HAS BEEN A SERIES OF HALF MEASURES THAT RESULT IN THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES GARNERING THE MAXIMUM OF ADVERSE WESTERN PUBLICITY WITH MINIMAL REAL RESULTS.

7. COMMENTING ON THE GENERAL SITUATION, TURCHIN SAID THAT HE WAS OPTIMISTIC, AND NOT JUST BECAUSE OF BELGRADE. THE CHARTER 77 DEVELOPMENT WAS SURPRISING AND MOST WELCOME. IN THAT CONNECTION, TURCHIN OBSERVED THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT STATEMENT ON CHARTER 77 HAD BEEN BOTH USEFUL AND OPPORTUNE. ASKED WHY THERE WERE SO FEW WORKERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE AMONG HUMAN RIGHTS DISSIDENTS, TURCHIN AGREED THAT THIS WAS A PROBLEM, BUT SAID THAT THE SITUATION WAS GETTING BETTER. ALEKSEYEVA ADDED THAT WHILE THERE WERE MANY IN THE USSR WHO REALIZED THAT THE REGIME WAS DREADFUL, THERE WERE FEW WHO

HAD THE COURAGE AND INTEGRITY TO DO MUCH ABOUT IT. IT REQUIRED A SPECIAL PERSON TO ACT, SHE SAID, ONE WHO REALIZED THAT HE MIGHT ACCOMPLISH LITTLE OR NOTHING CONCRETE, BUT WHO ACTED OUT OF MOTIVES OF CONSCIENCE.

8. TURCHIN ALSO GAVE US SOME DETAILS ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CSCE GROUP (SEE REFTEL). YURIY ORLOV HAS NOW BEEN TOLD THAT THE AUTHORITIES HAVE DECIDED NOT TO RECONNECT HIS PHONE AFTER ALL. A GEORGIAN CSCE GROUP IS NOW FORMED, ALTHOUGH NO DECISION HAS YET BEEN MADE ON WHEN TO ANNOUNCE ITS FORMATION TO THE WESTERN PRESS. THERE ARE SIX MEMBERS AT THIS TIME, AMONG THEM ZWIAD GAMSAKHURDIA, BUT THERE WILL BE NO CHAIRMAN.

9. ALEKSANDR GINSBURG HAS FINALLY BEEN RELEASED FROM THE HOSPITAL. HE HAS RECOVERED FROM HIS PNEUMONIA BUT HAS NOW CONTRACTED TUBERCULOSIS, AND WILL BE TREATED AS AN OUTPATIENT. GINZBURG'S WIFE NOTES THAT OUTPATIENT TREATMENT CAN ONLY BE PROVIDED IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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CITY OF OFFICIAL RESIDENCE. IN GINSBURG'S CASE, THIS IS TARUSA, A SMALL TOWN IN KALUGA OBLAST. NOW THAT GINSBURG'S PERIOD OF PROHIBITION OF RESIDENCE IN MOSCOW HAS ENDED, HE CAN LEGALLY RESIDE HERE. MRS. GINZBURG WILL APPLY FEBRUARY 1 TO CHANGE GINZBURG'S RESIDENCE TO MOSCOW, BUT HAS LITTLE HOPE THAT SHE WILL SUCCEED.
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